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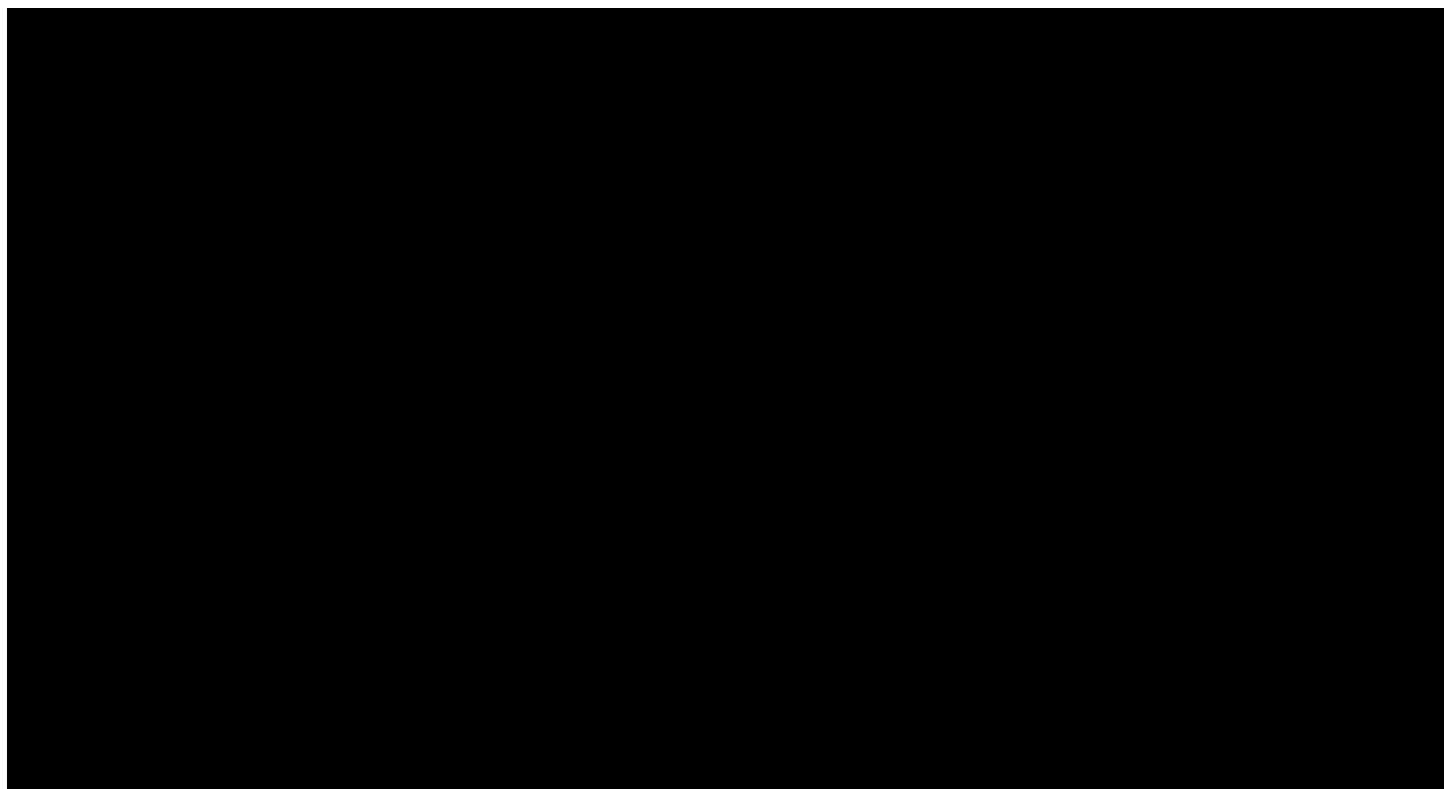


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Ginnie Graham: City leaders get into summer reading

By Ginnie Graham Editorial Writer 11 hrs ago





Tulsa Mayor G.T. Bynum reads to children following a news conference announcing a partnership between A Gathering Place for Tulsa and the Tulsa City-County Library. The event took place during the kickoff for the library's summer reading program in the A.R. and MaryLouise Tandy Foundation Children's Garden at Central Library in 2017. CORY YOUNG/Tulsa World

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Library summer reading program

For more information on the Tulsa City-County Library's summer reading program, go to tulsalibrary.org/summer

Program ends Aug. 4.

From "The Outsiders" to the Bible, city leaders are doing as much reading as the kids, choosing topics for pure entertainment or in pursuit of something more academic.

The [Tulsa City-County Library's summer reading program](#) ends on Aug. 4, and students are finishing up school summer reading lists.

I always participate in the library's adult program, which only asks for four books. It's worth the free Krispy Kreme doughnut and treats from Marble Slab Creamery, Mazzio's, Merritt's Bakery and admission to several museums and the Tulsa State Fair.

Reading serious articles and research for my job means I tend to go for light and fun fiction, but I try to incorporate a couple of thought-provoking books as a balance.

This summer, I finished a three-book historical Western romance by Rose Gordon (the Fort Gibson Officers series), "Killers of the Flower Moon" by David Grann, "Middlesex" by Jeffrey Eugenides and the Janet Evanovich "Wicked" series. This marks the first summer without a vampire or werewolf as a main character in my books.

I should get extra credit for reading along with my daughter's required school list, especially "The Phantom Tollbooth" by Norton Juster. I still think it's weird.

Of course Kimberly Johnson, as CEO of the Tulsa library system, is always in the middle of a book. Right now that's "An American Marriage" by Tayari Jones.

"I am drawn to really good stories about realistic complex characters navigating their way through real-life circumstances," Johnson said. "'An American Marriage' is beautifully written, current and timely. It's also a page-turner, which makes it a great summer read. Readers will be thinking about Roy and Celestial long after the story ends."

Leaders from across Tulsa have their own summer literary passions.

County Commissioner Karen Keith said there is nothing better than reading in her backyard, preferring historical books. She recently finished "Telex from Cuba" by Rachel Kushner and is now working through "Wolf Hall" by Hilary Mantel, who will receive the Peggy V. Helmerich Distinguished Author Award on Dec. 7.

“Wikipedia is my best friend,” Keith said. “I find myself going back and forth trying to learn more about the characters as I attempt to keep them straight. I should have paid much closer attention to the cast of characters outlined at the beginning of the book. Those pages are also easy to go back to, and I’m grateful they are there.”

Tulsa City Councilors Phil Lakin and Connie Dodson finally read “The Outsiders” by internationally renowned local author S.E. Hinton.

Dodson said she is reading with her junior high-aged son, and Lakin added another classic into his summer list.

“When I was in high school, students were able to select which books they would like to read and review. I had always regretted not choosing ‘To Kill a Mockingbird’ or ‘The Outsiders,’” Lakin said. “Earlier this summer, I buried that regret by listening to both books. Actress Sissy Spacek’s spunky, Texas drawl will forever be how I hear character Scout’s life change.

“And, for a Tulsa boy like me, there’s simply no substitute for S.E. Hinton’s actual words and story.”

Councilor Jeannie Cue says she’s reading the Bible and “Dress Like a Million at Goodwill” by local writer Jean Kelly.

Between knocking on doors for her election campaign, Councilor Karen Gilbert is picking up “Killers of the Flower Moon.”

Tulsa Mayor G.T. Bynum just finished “The Lion and the Unicorn” by Richard Aldous, which I erroneously thought was something his young daughter might have suggested.



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Instead, it is a noted biographical history of 19th century rival British prime ministers William Gladstone and Benjamin Disraeli.

“I enjoyed it because they both come off as complex figures,” Bynum said. “Gladstone is so admirable in his professional life, but his private life is problematic. Disraeli is openly motivated by fame in his professional life (not so admirable for a public servant), but is a devoted husband and friend in his private life.

“The books read like a novel. I picked it because I’ve been interested in both of them for a long time. It led me to move onto much larger individual biographies of each.”

If I could be in a book club with Bynum, my brain would get smarter. But, my tastes tend to align with that of City Councilor Anna America.

The last two books America read were Linda Howard’s “The

Woman Left Behind” and Jayne Ann Krentz’s “Promise Not to Tell.” She borrowed hardback copies from the Tulsa City-County Library. She also reads several titles on a digital tablet, including those from author Nora Roberts. Audio books play in her car with “Liar, Liar” by Lisa Jackson as the current narrative.

“When I get a chance to read for pleasure, I read nothing good for me,” she said. “I go for pure, fun escapism, which for me is mostly stuff like romantic suspense, chick lit, what I’d call ‘women’s mystery.’”

I got over being self-conscious about the more feel-good, romance or even silly books that may grace my nightstand.

Reading ought to be a fun, enlightening and enjoyable experience, no matter where personal choices take someone.

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